

Juvenile Fire Prevention Task Force

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County Executive

Monroe County Fire Bureau

Recent Study States Childhood Fire Setting, Animal Cruelty Tied to Family Dysfunction (Condensed from Reuters Health)

Special points of interest:

- *Childhood Fire setting Study*
- *Upcoming JFIP Prevention Projects*
- *New NYS Laws relating to Skateboards/Helmet Safety*
- *Opening of New Burn Unit at Strong Hospital*

Inside this issue:

Smoke & Co Detector Project	2
Bullying Conference	2
New Smoke Detector Technology	3
New NYS Safety Law	3
Burn Unit Opening	4
Billboard Campaign	5
Video Prevention Series	5

A recent study continued to provide additional evidence linking family dysfunction to conduct behavior problems in children and eventually adolescent delinquency.

More specifically, the latest research study shows a link between childhood fire setting behavior and marital violence and paternal abuse of animals and alcohol. The full research study, which appears in the July '04 issue of the Journal of American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, also ties cruelty to animals by children to marital violence and harsh parenting.

A University of Hawaii researcher, Dr. Kimberly D. Becker and colleagues analyzed information provided in 1990 by 363 mothers and one of their 6—12 year old children as part of a 10-year prospective study into the

impact of marital violence on children's mental health.

The researchers conducted interviews with 86% of the original cohort in 1996 and 1998 and reviewed court records to gather information on juvenile delinquency.

Children residing in maritally violent homes or in homes where the father abused the family pet were more likely to set fires than children residing in homes in which they were not confronted with these behaviors. Having a father who drank alcohol also increased the odds of fire setting behavior.

Likewise, children from violent homes were 2.3 times more likely to be cruel to animals than were those from nonviolent homes. "Harsh parenting" also significantly increased the likelihood that a child would be cruel

to animals. After controlling for childhood conduct disorders, children who set fires were 3 times more likely than non-firesetters to be referred to juvenile court and 3.3 times more likely to be arrested for a violent crime.

Results for the study indicate that a history of familial violence coupled with parental alcohol abuse are strong predictors of a child engaging in "conduct disorder like behaviors" such as fire setting and these behaviors should be taken seriously.

Thus reemphasizing JFIP's philosophy that regardless of the perceived significance of a fire setting event by a child, a referral should occur so that a proper assessment may be completed. Call Fred Rion at 279-4050 with referrals or questions.

Monroe County JFIP to Contract for Child Mental Health Services Contributed by Fred Rion

As part of a quarter million dollar grant the Monroe County Fire Bureau's Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program (JFIP) received from the Federal government, the JFIP will contract for mental health services for youth.

A Request for Qualifications was distributed by

the JFIP office in October and submissions were received into November. The RFQ was awarded to local therapist/researcher/author Paul Schwartzman of Fairport, New York. Mr. Schwartzman has over 20 years of experience working with the juvenile firesetter

population. He has authored numerous research articles and book chapters on the topic as well as presented throughout the United States on the topic of juvenile fire setting. In addition, Mr. Schwartzman was a member of the research team at the (continued on page 2)

Mental Health Services (continued from page 1)

University of Rochester that was responsible for the research that led to the creation of the City of Rochester Fire Department's Fire Related Youth Program (FRY). The FRY program was the first of its type and seen as the bench mark for all other juvenile fire-



setter intervention programs that have been created since.

Mr. Schwartzman's tasks with the Monroe County JFIP will be

to provide mental health treatment to children in need of those services. On average, 30-40% of the children referred to the County JFIP each year are in need of ongoing mental health services. In addition, Mr. Schwartzman will develop risk assessment tools to determine future fire setting risks as well as mental health assessment screening tools for JFIP officers to use in the field. Finally, Mr. Schwartzman will be charged with developing and instituting a two day training for local mental health providers around the topic of working with juvenile firesetters. At present, there is a huge gap in

this area locally, and JFIP is hopeful that this training will increase the resource pool of potential mental health treatment providers to work with the juvenile firesetter population.

This contract will run through June of 2005 and efforts are being made by JFIP staff to secure future funding to continue this project. For questions regarding this program, contact Fred Rion at 279-4053 or e-mail at frion@monroecounty.gov.

JFIP Continues to Provide Smoke & Carbon Monoxide Detectors



The Monroe County Fire Bureau's Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program is continuing to provide smoke detectors to residents of the towns of Webster and East Rochester. These smoke detectors are being provided by the JFIP through a grant secured from the New York State Department of Health/Bureau of Injury Prevention. In those two towns to date, JFIP has installed nearly 1,000 smoke detectors. Fred

Rion of the JFIP stated that the program still has approximately 1,200 detectors to install in those two towns.

In addition to the project underway in East Rochester and Webster, a Federal grant secured by JFIP has allowed them to purchase a combined 8,500+ smoke and carbon monoxide alarms to give away to residents of JFIP's jurisdictional coverage who are in need of those items.

Rion goes on to say that the Fire Bureau's goal is to blanket the

area with these life saving devices in hopes that county residents will take advantage of the free services being provided.

For anyone interested in receiving these detectors for free, please contact the Fire Bureau's smoke & co detector hotline at 279-4063. Hundreds of calls have come in over the last several weeks so JFIP staff request that if you do call, please be patient and staff will return your call as soon as possible.

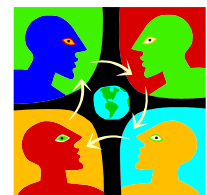
Second Annual Bullying Conference Held

The second annual bullying prevention conference was held on Friday, November 5, 2004 at Temple B'rith Kodesh in Brighton. The conference was entitled "Bullying Prevention: A Community Approach Towards Solutions". The conference was sponsored by Youth Emergency Services, the Finger Lakes Regional Burn Association and the Monroe County Fire Bureau and was attended

by over 350 parents and professionals from Monroe and surrounding counties.

Speakers for the day included Dr. Kelly Zinna, a forensic psychologist based near Washington, D.C. Dr. Zinna specializes in areas such as school violence, threatening behaviors and bullying. She also authored the book, *After Columbine* based upon her

experience with the Columbine tragedy. The afternoon session's presenter was John Linney of Impact Associates based in El Paso, Texas. Mr. Linney has experience in youth development and community building. (Continued on page 4)



Vocal Smoke Detectors Available Contributed by Fred Rion

Lately, the issue of children sleeping through fire alarms has received a significant amount of media attention with many fire departments and television stations teaming up to conduct controlled experiments to determine if children will wake up to the “traditional” fire alarm. Research from the Victoria University Sleep Lab in Melbourne, Australia found that only 57% of children woke up to a traditional smoke alarm signal while all of the children woke up to a recording of their mother’s voice.

Underwriters Laboratories (UL) took a deeper look into the issue a little over 18 months ago and concluded that conventional smoke detectors simply would not wake some children and said that a voice alert system may be worth looking into. UL went on to provide data regarding children’s “sleep time” being as much as 30% in the “slow-wave” sleep category which is characterized by slow brain activity thus making it more difficult to wake them. In comparison adults spend about 10% of sleep time

in slow-wave sleep. UL goes on to say that further research is needed and that these were only preliminary results.

With all of that being said, KidSmart has developed a new vocal smoke detector. The battery-operated smoke detector includes a speaker system for parents to record a wake-up message and brief instructions for their child. In addition it has a directional alarm which allows parents to aim the high output speaker (continued on page 4 top)

Booster Seat Quick Facts Contributed by Jean Triest

According to data collected by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, nearly 3,300 children ages four to seven died in motor vehicle crashes in the United States between 1994 and 2002. Seventy nine of those deaths occurred here in New York State.

Buckling up increases the chances of survival, however, using a belt positioning booster seat with a lap and shoulder belt greatly reduces a child’s injury of risk (by 59%) when

compared to children who use only safety belts. In addition, children 12 years and younger should ride in the back seat. The simple task of properly buckling up children in the back seat reduces the risk of being killed in a crash by 33%.

In a survey conducted by the Bureau of Injury Prevention, most parents reported not using booster seats because the New York State law did not require their use for children in the age group of 4-8.

Now, effective April 1, 2005 New York State law requires children between the ages of 4-7 who are 4’9” or less to be properly restrained in booster seats or appropriate child safety restraints that meet applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards. Booster seats **MUST** be used with a lap and shoulder belt.

If you have traffic safety questions, please contact Jean Triest at 428-4903 or Deb DeCaire at 428-4948.

New Law Requires Skateboarders to Wear Helmets



requirements put in place by the new

Gov. George Pataki signed legislation into law that will require New Yorkers under the age of 14 who ride skateboards to wear safety helmets. The re-

law are the same as those currently required for children who ride bicycles, scooters and use in-line skates.

The new law also prohibits skateboarders from attaching themselves to any automobile on the roadway, and restricts them from carrying any items that obstruct their view. Additionally, the new statute will include skateboards in a list of items that

are included in the State’s bicycle and in-line skate public education and safety awareness program. For more information, visit www.safeny.com.

Vocal Smoke Detectors Available (continued from page 3)

directly at their child's sleeping area, and it has an innovative fire drill features so that parents can set the alarm



and leave the room. When the alarm

sounds, the parent's voice message alternates with a traditional fire alarm sound.

For more information on the KidSmart Vocal Smoke Detector, go to www.kidsmartcorp.com.

This article should not be seen as an excuse to stop using traditional smoke alarms or a statement of support for vocal smoke detectors. Smoke detectors have likely saved more lives in the last 30+ years than any other home safety device. JFIP advocates for all individuals to utilize properly

functioning smoke detectors on each level of their home and near all sleeping areas. In addition, the development of and regular practicing of a home escape plan are the best ways to keep your family safe and prepared in the event of a fire in your home. There is no better precaution than being prepared. For more information, please contact the Monroe County Fire Bureau at 279-4050.

Bullying Conference (Continued from page 3)

Feedback from the conference was very positive and the panel discussion at the end of the day provided a great dialogue between conference attendees and experts and professionals throughout our community on strategies and means to address the bullying issue in their setting.

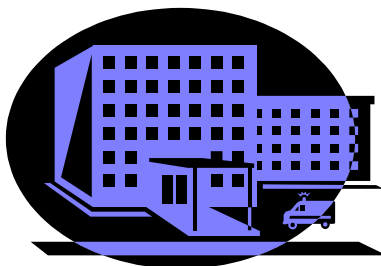
In addition to the valuable information that was shared, the winners of the 1st Annual Bullying Prevention Poster Contest were awarded their prizes which included gift certi-

ficates and the grand prize of having one of the winner's posters converted into a billboard (See story on page 5 regarding billboard campaigns).

If you or someone in your organization is interested in addressing the bullying issue at your agency or if there is an interest in joining the Bullying Prevention Task Force, please contact Dr. Elizabeth Meeker, committee chair at 613-7632. Also, please visit our bullying prevention website at www.yesprogram.com/bully.asp



Strong Memorial Hospital Opens New Burn Trauma Unit



On Tuesday, December 7, 2004 the Kessler Family Adult Burn/Trauma Intensive Care Unit (AICU)

opened to patients on the third floor of Strong Memorial Hospital, directly above the emergency department. The new unit consists of 25 beds. The 20,000 square foot unit is three times larger than the previous one and is among the largest in the state.

The trauma portion of the AICU houses equipment needed to perform bedside procedures. Among

many of the new features included are rooms equipped with separate temperature systems to maintain specific heat and humidity requirements, helping to maintain the body temperature of patients who are in shock from their injuries.

There are also a number of rooms designed specifically to help people (continued on back page)

Billboard Prevention Campaign to Begin

The Monroe County Fire Bureau's Juvenile Fire Prevention Program (JFIP) is about to embark on an ambitious billboard prevention message campaign. With dollars that have been secured from a Federal grant, JFIP will be putting together various billboards in cooperation with Lamar Outdoor Advertising.

The grant money will pay for the production and art work that goes into the billboards while Lamar has generously donated the billboard space.

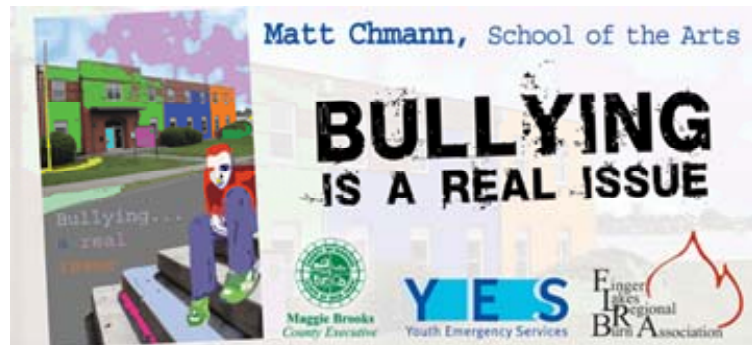
Over the course of the next six months, thirty billboards will go up around Monroe County with five different messages ranging from fire prevention to bullying prevention.

The first two billboards to go up in January 2005 will be devoted to the importance of smoke detectors and bullying prevention.

The smoke detector billboard was designed by Fred Rion of JFIP, Bryan Shutt of Lamar Outdoor Advertising and staff from the Monroe County Communications Department. The draft of the billboard is as follows;



The second billboard going up in January 2005 was designed by the grand prize winner of the 1st Annual Bullying Prevention Poster Contest, Matt Ehmann of School of the Arts.



Look for more billboards throughout the upcoming year.

Production Set to Begin on Video Prevention Series



Monroe County Fire Bureau's JFIP is ready to begin production along with Monroe Community College's Video Production Unit on five prevention videos geared towards various populations.

The cost of the videos is being covered by a Federal grant secured by JFIP in early 2004.

Video topics include family/child fire prevention, senior citizen fire safety, home sprinkler systems, college dormitory fire safety and bullying prevention. Other possible videos include dangers of fireworks and preventing juvenile fire setting.

JFIP hopes that these videos will provide life saving information to varied populations of our community.

If you or a representative from your agency would like to be a part of this video series, either by assisting in script development or appearing in a video, please contact Fred Rion at 279-4053.

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The Monroe County Fire Bureau
"Working to Keep Our Community Safe"

WE'RE ON THE WEB

AT

WWW.MONROECOUNTY.GOV

JFIP staff would like to reach a wide-ranging audience with this newsletter and provide valuable information on a variety of topics to everyone. However, JFIP's main focus continues to be the prevention and recognition of juvenile fire setting and juvenile arson as a community problem. If you have concerns regarding a child under the age of 18 years of age who has been involved in some type of fire play or fire setting incident, do not hesitate to contact the Monroe County Fire Bureau's Juvenile Firesetter Intervention program to discuss the matter and schedule a time for a juvenile officer to come to the home and provide a quality education program to the child. No incident is too minor and your questions will always be answered. We thank you for reading this publication and sharing the information with coworkers. For additional copies or to be added to our mailing list, contact the Fire Bureau at the address provided. Thank you and Happy New Year!

Strong Hospital's New Burn Unit Opens (continued from page 4)

suffering from severe burns. These rooms offer individual temperature controls, and specially equipped bathrooms and showers to make bathing more comfortable. The AICU also has an enhanced hydrotherapy room for patients in the acute phase of burn recovery, a physical and occupational therapy gym for in-hospital rehabilitation sessions and an outpatient room to provide treatment for burns during nights and weekends.

The AICU features a decentralization of computer stations, which encourages caregivers to move away from a model of caring for patients in which health care professionals congregated around a single nursing station. Now, there is an individualized nursing station outside of each room, so nurses can review monitors and enter information into the computer without ever losing sight of the patient. This information is then fed to a central nursing station, where patients' vital signs are also monitored.

(The preceding information was taken directly from the Strong Memorial Hospital website and can be found at

<http://www.stronghealth.com/>)